

VZCZCXRO7941
RR RUEHPA
DE RUEHAR #1072/01 1290724
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 090724Z MAY 06
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1230
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 001072

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [GH](#)
SUBJECT: Ghana's Dagbon Conflict Moving Toward Peace

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Four years after his murder, the late king of the Dagbon traditional area in northeastern Ghana, Ya Na Yakubu Andani II, was buried in Yendi on April 10. This brought to an end a prolonged stalemate between the Andani "gate" (line of succession) and its rival Abudus over the ceremonial requirements for the funeral. On April 21, a regent was installed. Both the burial and installation were largely peaceful. President Kufuor visited Yendi on May 7 to support this major step toward ending Ghana's worst internal conflict. Nonetheless, there remain unresolved issues in this conflict-prone region, including selection of a new Ya-Na, which could renew tensions in the future. End Summary.

Background

12. (U) On March 27, 2002, the 28-year reign of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, King of the Dagbon traditional area in Northern Region, ended when he and 40 others were murdered in his palace in the town of Yendi. The Ya-Na's body was dismembered and has been stored in a local morgue for the past four years. Between 2002 and 2004, the Northern Regional government imposed a State of Emergency in Yendi. Since the Ya-Na's death, the Andani and Abudu "gates" (lines of inheritance) within the Dagbon tribe could not agree on a succession. While the government has been investigating the murder, to date the culprits have not been identified, causing many observers to believe the GOG was in some way complicit. The Abudu-Andani succession conflict has been Ghana's most significant indigenous conflict, occasionally erupting into violence.

Ya-Na Buried, Regent Installed

13. (U) After four years of negotiation, a committee of eminent chiefs led by the Ashanti King (Asantehene) agreed in April to appoint the Ya-Na's oldest son, Kamakuya Naa Abudali Yakubu Andani, as Regent. This decision paved the way for the burial of the Ya-Na's remains on April 10 at the royal mausoleum inside Gbewah Palace in Yendi.

14. (SBU) On April 21, the Regent was "enskinned" (a traditional installation) at a ceremony presided over by the Northern Regional Minister, and the Ministers of Interior and Agriculture. The new Andani Regent appealed to the people of Dagbon to leave the past behind and build a united, peaceful future. Both the enskinment and the burial were peaceful, thanks in large measure to a massive police and military presence.

President Supports Peace

¶5. (U) In addition to intervention from key traditional leaders, the GOG has supported the peace process. On May 7, President Kufuor, accompanied by the Vice President, visited Yendi for the first time since the Ya-Na's death. He paid tribute to the late Ya-Na and congratulated the Regent, stating "we cannot talk about total peace in the country if there is no peace in Dagbon." In late April, Vice President Aliu had traveled to his village in Dagbon for the first time in four years, paying a call on the new Regent.

Comment

¶6. (SBU) The successful burial of the Ya-Na and enskinment of a Regent is a significant step in resolving Ghana's most contentious and long festering internal dispute. Top political leaders and the NPP are eager to gain political mileage out of peace in Dagbon. Nonetheless, there remains significant tension in this conflict-prone region. One contact who attended the installation of the Regent remarked on the visible animosity between Abudus and Andanis at the event, even though there was no violence. The GOG reportedly helped the peace process by paying money to the local Abudu and Andani leaders, which may not portend well for sustainable stability. In addition, the GOG has still not identified the murderer of the Ya-Na and his entourage, a sore point that the new Regent has repeatedly made in public statements.

¶7. (SBU) Perhaps most significantly, a decision has not yet been made about who will be the next Ya-Na. The long-delayed funeral of the Abudu Ya-Na who died in the 1980s is expected to take place in May. After this funeral, his son

ACCRA 00001072 002 OF 002

will become the official Abudu Regent. The Abudus and Andanis will then have to sort out which of the two Regents (or possibly another contender within the Abudu gate) will become the next Ya-Na, a possibly contentious process which may drag out for years.

LANIER